

Your Honor,

I do not know where to even begin. First, I must apologize for my actions and laps of judgement. I take full responsibility for what I have done. I am paying the price for those actions. For my transgressions, I lost everything dear to me. My wife, daughter's, family members, friends, co-workers, and my career.

I have come to the realization that I've been dealing with mental health issues for most, if not all of my adult life. It may have even started before that. I never thought my addiction was so out of control. Being in my profession, I was always the strong one, thinking I can never show any weakness. The fear of anyone knowing how I have an addiction, let alone an addiction to pornography, was hurting me more than I could have imagined.

I've spent the last 30 years of my life protecting and serving the people of my community. I have received countless awards and accolads from my department, the citizens, and the Governor of Missouri. I once led my department in the most lives saved. From entering burning buildings, to performing CPR on infants and adults, to saving those who have overdosed on narcotics.

I never thought I could not handle the pressures of my profession. When it came to the stress of it all; The aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown, the riots of Ferguson, to the shootings of two of my co-workers, to the suicide of a ten year old boy, it got the better of me.

Those are just a few incidents that contributed to my stress. I turned to pornography and alcohol, both spiralling out of control. If I was to seek help, I feared I would be looked upon as weak, not only by my family, the citizens, but by my peers. I was not strong enough to face them all.

I know now, no one should be afraid to deal with mental health issues, no matter your profession. I have many more years, if afforded me, that I can help others with mental health related issues and be a productive citizen again. Relating to my own experiences, I feel I can talk with and counsel others. More than half of my time working in my profession, I spent counselling others from domestic issues, to drugs, to schooling, etc.

By no means do I think I am cured. Mental health is an ongoing battle. With that understanding and counselling, I can cope with the everyday issues. I know I can be a productive citizen again.

I put my own selfishness before God, everyone, and thing. I know now that God will always be first in my life. It is sad that it took this for me to realize it. I grew up in a strong Christian family, my father, being an Ordained Reverend, I was taught right from wrong. I continued putting myself and my addictive actions first, before Christ and my loved ones.

I pray for your compassion and understanding on my sentencing.

If I am to be released, I will be moving home with my father in Higginsville, Missouri. My father has numerous health issues related to Parkinson's disease, to issues caused by the Vietnam War. He has become confined to a wheel chair. He is unable to drive himself to his medical appointments with the VA. He is needing assistance with everything.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted

Gerry G. Ottip